

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 H-01 INR-10 INT-05 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 USIA-06 OES-07 SP-02
SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 NRC-05 PA-01 SIL-01
LAB-04 IO-13 /144 W
-----050637 110734Z /14

R 100652Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2659
INFO DOE GERMANTOWN
DOE WASHDC
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, EMIN, ENRG, ENUC, AS
SUBJ: GOA AGREES TO CONSULTATIONS WITH ACTU ON URANIUM SAFEGUARDS

REF: (A) CANBERRA 1161 (B) CANBERRA 1749

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER FRASER AND SENIOR GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS HAVE AGREED TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT HAWKE AND
ACTU EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS TO DISCUSS URANIUM SAFEGUARDS.
THE MEETING IS IN RESPONSE TO AN ACTU CONFERENCE ON
FEBRUARY 11 WHICH CALLED FOR "FULL CONSULTATIONS" WITH
THE GOVERNMENT ON PRESENT AND FUTURE SAFEGUARDS. THE GOA
DECISION TO MEET WITH THE TRADE UNION LEADERS REPRESENTS
ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT VICTORY FOR HAWKE AND ACTU MODERATES
OVER THE ACTU'S MILITANT LEFTIST MINORITY WHO HAVE BEEN
GOING ALL OUT TO PREVENT THE MINING AND SHIPMENT OF
URANIUM. IT WAS DOUBLY SWEET BECAUSE IT CAME ON THE
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HEELS OF A MARCH 6 MELBOURNE WATERSIDE (LONGSHOREMEN)
WORKERS' OVERWHELMING VOTE (THREE TO ONE) TO ENDORSE THE
ACTU DECISION ON URANIUM EXPORT CONTRACTS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE MEETING IS BEING ARRANGED BY MINISTER OF
EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS STREET. AS WELL AS
PM FRASER, FONMIN PEACOCK, AND MINISTER OF ALORGININAL

AFFAIRS VINER (THE RIGHTS OF ABORIGINES IN THIS MATTER
WILL ALSO BE DISCUSSED) WILL ALSO ATTEND.

3. ACTU PRESIDENT BOB HAWKE WELCOMED THE MEETING AS A
POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE FEBRUARY ACTU CONFERENCE. AMONG
OTHER THINGS, HE SAID THE ACTU UNIONS WOULD ASK FOR FULL
DETAILS OF PRESENT SAFEGUARDS AND THOSE LIKELY TO BE
DEVELOPED SOON. HE SAID THE ACTU WOULD NOT PASS JUDGMENT
ON THE MATTER UNTIL WE KNOW WHAT THE GOVERNMENT KNOWS.
HAWKE ALSO SAID THE GOA REACTION WAS AN INDICATION THAT
THE ACTU HAD DEALT REASONABLY WITH THE URANIUM ISSUE.
"WE'VE HANDLED THE THING VERY COOLLY AND I THINK VERY
SENSIBLE," HE SAID. "THERE WAS A CLEAR ONUS ON THE
GOVERNMENT TO RESPOND POSITIVELY AND I AM GLAD THAT THEY
HAVE."

4. ONE OF THE KEY ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION WILL BE THE
SETTING UP OF AN INDEPENDENT URANIUM ADVISORY COUNCIL.
HAWKE SAID HE WOULD PRESS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A
RECOMMENDATION THAT " A PERMANENT URANIUM ADVISORY
COUNCIL TO INCLUDE ADEQUATE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
PEOPLE BE ESTABLISHED IMMEDIATELY TO ADVISE THE GOVERN-
MENT BUT WITH THE DUTY ALSO TO REPORT AT LEAST ANNUALLY
TO THE PARLIAMENT WITH REGARD TO THE EXPORT AND USS OF
AUSTRALIAN URANIUM HAVING IN MIND THE HAZARDS, DANGERS,
AND PROBLEMS OF AND ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRODUCTION OF
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NUCLEAR ENERGY."

5. HE ALSO SAID IT WAS UP TO THE ACTU EXECUTIVE TO DE-
CIDE WHETHER IT COULD MAKE A DECISION ON THE ADEQUACY
OF THE SAFEGUARDS OR WHETHER IT SHOULD BE REFERRED TO A
SPECIAL ACTU CONFERENCE. BUT THAT DAY HE SAID WAS STILL
FAR OFF.

6. HAWKE STRESSED THAT THE FEBRUARY 11 CONFERENCE DID
NOT AUTHORIZE THE OPENING OF NEW MINES -- EVEN TO HONOR
EXISTING CONTRACTS. THAT, HE SAID, WOULD DEPEND UPON
RECEIPT OF SATISFACTORY ASSURANCES ABOUT NON-PROLIFERATION
SAFEGUARDS AND WASTE DISPOSAL PLANS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: URANIUM, NEGOTIATIONS, LABOR UNIONS, NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CANBER01827
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780109-0469
Format: TEL
From: CANBERRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780384/aaaacszh.tel
Line Count: 108
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4cb3acc9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 CANBERRA 1161, 78 CANBERRA 1749
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3377587
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOA AGREES TO CONSULTATIONS WITH ACTU ON URANIUM SAFEGUARDS
TAGS: ELAB, EMIN, ENRG, MNUC, AS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4cb3acc9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014